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"The President rightly acknowledged today that energy independence can only be achieved by keeping all domestic energy options on the table.

"Exploration in the eastern Gulf will do a great deal to expand the presence of Louisiana in the offshore economy. Port Fourchon is already established as a critical component to our nation's energy demands. Now with projects like the deepening of Baptiste Collette, we can expand the role of the rest of Louisiana's ports in servicing new offshore fields.

"Opening the OCS along the Atlantic coast could be a shot in the arm for Louisiana's economy, as our homegrown companies are unparalleled in offshore exploration, drilling and services. Expanding to Virginia allows our workers even more opportunities and good-paying jobs, right here in the United States."

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